

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 102917 TOSEC 110273

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CHEROKEE FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), OGEN

SUBJECT: INITIATIVES ON THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FOREIGN
SERVICE

1. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST FOR INITIATIVES WHICH YOU MIGHT TAKE BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE YEAR, I HAVE BEEN STUDYING A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING THE OPERATION AND MORALE OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE FOREIGN SERVICE. SOME OF THESE INITIATIVES -- SUCH AS A BETTER SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE DEPARTMENT TO IMPROVE OUR FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES -- ARE NOW IN THE WORKS, AND WILL BE SENT TO YOU WITHIN ANOTHER DAY OR TWO.
2. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SEVERAL PROPOSALS WHICH I PUT FORWARD FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION WHICH COULD BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY AFTER YOUR RETURN FROM AFRICA.
3. ONE IDEA IS TO INITIATE A SERIES OF OVERSEAS REGIONAL CONFERENCES FOR HEADS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTIONS

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(NOT AMBASSADORS OR DCM'S) ON SELECTED FUNCTIONAL AND

REGIONAL ISSUES OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THESE COULD COVER SUCH TOPICS AS WORLD MONETARY PROBLEMS; NON-PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS; SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT; NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES, SECURITY ISSUES (SALT, MBFR, US-SOVIET RELATIONS); MULTILATERALISM AND UN PROBLEMS; AS WELL AS MORE REGIONALLY-FOCUSSED ISSUES, SUCH AS THE EMERGENCE OF BRAZIL TO GREAT POWER STATUS; COMMUNISTS IN GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN EUROPE. THESE MEETINGS WOULD BE ATTENDED BY EXPERTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT, OTHER AGENCIES AND POSSIBLY FROM OUTSIDE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. I HAVE IN MIND AN ISS-TYPE CONFERENCE HELD AT A CAPITAL IN EACH OF THE FIVE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS WHERE FSO'S AND EXPERTS CAN MEET FOR SEVERAL DAYS, DISCUSS PAPERS AND EXCHANGE VIEWS. ALTERNATIVELY OR IN ADDITION, THESE CONFERENCES COULD BE HELD IN THE DEPARTMENT AND WOULD PROVIDE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A BRIEF PERSONAL APPEARANCE. I TEND TO FAVOR A WASHINGTON LOCUS, BUT EITHER WAY WOULD WORK.

4. CONFERENCES WITH THIS CONCEPTUAL BREADTH AND SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN HELD. THEY COULD NOT ONLY VASTLY IMPROVE THE APPRECIATION BY FSO'S OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND THE INCREASINGLY FUNCTIONAL NATURE OF WORLD PROBLEMS, BUT WOULD BE A REAL BOOST TO MORALE. THEY ALSO -- IF THEY WORK -- MIGHT WELL BE SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE CONTINUED BY SUCCESSIVE SECRETARIES.

5. A RELATED IDEA YOU MAY WANT TO THINK ABOUT IS TO HOLD A MEETING WITH THE ENTIRE AF BUREAU UPON YOUR RETURN FROM AFRICA. YOU MIGHT SPEAK FOR ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES ON YOUR IMPRESSIONS AND THEN RESPOND TO QUESTIONS. IF THIS MEETING WERE HELD AND YOU FOUND IT WORTHWHILE, IT MIGHT BE FOLLOWED BY A SESSION WITH EUR AFTER YOUR RETURN FROM THE NATO MINISTERIAL AND PERHAPS SUBSEQUENTLY BY MEETINGS WITH THE OTHER BUREAUS AS YOU TRAVEL IN THEIR AREAS.

6. ANOTHER INITIATIVE WHICH COULD FOLLOW ON YOUR AFRICAN TRIP WOULD BE TO ANNOUNCE A SERIES OF INTERRELATED PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF OVERSEAS SERVICE, PARTICULARLY IN HARDSHIP POSTS SUCH AS AFRICA. TAKEN
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TOGETHER I BELIEVE THESE PROPOSALS WOULD DEMONSTRATE YOUR INTEREST IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND COULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS FOR OFFICERS AND STAFF.

7. THE ELEMENTS OF THIS PACKAGE WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

A. TAXATION OF ALLOWANCES. THE POSSIBILITY THAT CONGRESS WILL IMPOSE TAXES ON ALL FOREIGN SERVICE ALLOWANCES

(EDUCATION, HOUSING AND REPRESENTATION) IS OF DEEPEST CONCERN TO FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS AND STAFF. SHOULD THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE PROCEED -- AS IT MAY -- TO REVISE THE TAX LAWS THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE A NUMBER OF RESIGNATIONS, AND A SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF MORALE AMONGST THOSE

REMAINING. A STRONG PERSONAL STATEMENT THAT YOU OPPOSE SUCH TAXATION -- PLUS A DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH ACTION -- WOULD BE WIDELY HAILED.

B. STAFF MORALE. ALTHOUGH THE SECRETARIAL TASK FORCE REPORT HAS SOMEWHAT IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS OF SECRETARIES, STAFF PERSONNEL AS A WHOLE AND COMMUNICATORS IN PARTICULAR CONTINUE TO SUFFER FROM POOR MORALE. THEY FEEL THEY HAVE INADEQUATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING; POOR CAREER COUNSELING; SUBSTANDARD HOUSING AT SOME POSTS; LACK OF DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES WHICH REQUIRES PAYMENT OF TAXES EVEN THOUGH HOST COUNTRY STAFF IN WASHINGTON ENJOY SUCH PRIVILEGES. COMMUNICATORS CONSIDER THE CONDITIONS AND HOURS OF WORK UNFAIR. WHILE MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE INVETERATE, THERE ARE SOME POSITIVE STEPS WHICH COULD BE TAKEN IF THERE WERE THE PROPER IMPETUS. I THINK THIS IMPETUS COULD TAKE THE FORM OF A REQUEST BY YOU FOR A REPORT WITHIN 60 DAYS PROPOSING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN PERSONNEL PRACTICES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR SECRETARIES AND OTHER STAFF PERSONNEL.

C. CHANCERIES AND HOUSING. CHANCERIES ARE IN MANY CASES WELL BELOW AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD, BOTH IN TERMS OF WORKING CONDITIONS FOR PERSONNEL AND IN REPRESENTING THE PRESTIGE OF THE UNITED STATES. MOREOVER, WE ARE ENGAGING IN LARGE-SCALE FALSE ECONOMY IN MANY CASES BY RENTING CHANCERIES AND HOUSING WHEN IT WOULD BE FAR CHEAPER TO

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CONSTRUCT OUR OWN. IN SHORT, OUR OVERSEAS REALTY SITUATION IS A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE AND ONE WHERE A PUSH FROM YOU IN TERMS OF SUPPORTING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM AND THE REQUISITE FUNDS WOULD BE OF LONG-TERM BENEFIT. BECAUSE OF THE FUNDS ASPECT AND THE CONSEQUENT NEED FOR SOME SORT OF PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORIZATION, I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU COULD DO IMMEDIATELY UPON YOUR RETURN. BUT THERE IS REAL MERIT IN THE PROPOSAL AND WAYNE HAYS HAS TOLD ME HE WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT AN INITIATIVE ON THIS ISSUE. AT A MINIMUM, YOU MIGHT PUBLICLY ORDER A STUDY OF OUR OVERSEAS BUILDINGS SITUATION, WITH THE REPORT TO BE SENT TO YOU FOR YOUR REVIEW WITHIN 30 DAYS. YOU COULD THEN, IF YOU AGREE WITH OUR FINDINGS, FORWARD IT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS APPROVAL.

8. THESE IDEAS NEED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT BUT IF THEY APPEAL TO YOU WE CAN DRAFT A SPEECH OR STATEMENT YOU COULD ISSUE ON YOUR RETURN WHICH WOULD CONTAIN THE PROPOSALS DISCUSSED ABOVE.

9. I HAVE SOME OTHER IDEAS OF A BROADER NATURE (AS INDICATED IN PARAGRAPH ONE) THAT WOULD HAVE MORE LASTING

IMPACT. BUT THEY ALSO REQUIRE MORE THOUGHT AND, IF YOU DECIDE TO GO FORWARD, SOME INTERDEPARTMENTAL (E.G., OMB) WORK. PROPOSALS ON THESE IDEAS WILL BE SENT TO YOU IN A FEW DAYS. SISCO

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